

REMARKS

The above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated December 27, 2005. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

Claims 3-15 are under consideration in this application. Claims 1-2 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 3-4 and 8-9 are being amended, as set forth in the above marked-up presentation of the claim amendments, in order to more particularly define and distinctly claim Applicants' invention.

The claims are being amended to correct formal errors and/or to better disclose or describe the features of the present invention as claimed. All the amendments to the claims are supported by the specification. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Formality Rejection

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for being indefinite. Claim 1 has amended as required by the Examiner and then incorporated into claims 3-4. Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding informality rejections is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 12-15 were allowed, and claims 3-7 and 10-11 would be allowed if rewritten to overcome the following 112 rejections and including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

As claims 3-4 are being rewritten to overcome the following 112 rejections and including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims, and all other claims depend from or being amended to depend from claims 3-4, claims 3-7 and 10-11 are in condition for allowance.

Prior Art Rejection

Claims 1, 2 and 8-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nysen et al. (6,611,224) in view of Burnner et al. (3,945,013).

As claims 1-2 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 8-9 are being amended to depend from the allowable claims 3-4, respectively, the rejection thus becomes moot.

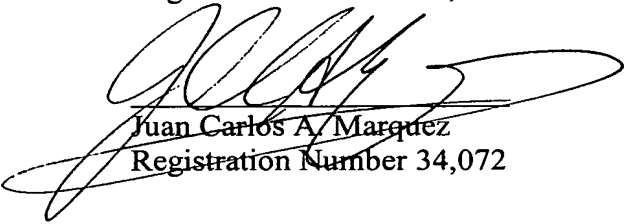
Conclusion

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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